

This morning at breakfast my son "Lugs" made one of his usual startling discoveries. "It's your birthday, Dad, and it will soon be Anzac Day." I admitted this fact and then drifted into a reverie, from which I was rudely awakened by "Lugs" who gloatingly informed me that I had just put jam in my tea. Now, if you know my son, you will have already noticed two good reasons why I call him "Lugs"; but they are exceeded by two other things, -- his thirst for information about things that don't concern him, and his outstanding ability for noticing things which you do not want him to notice.

Now since its inception, "Lugs" and I have always attended the Dawn Service on Anzac Day, so this morning when he had tactlessly led the conversation around to this Service, he drove me to bay with several direct questions, not to ~~me~~ mind you, but to his mother. "Mum, why does Dad keep blowing his nose at the Dawn Service when everyone is supposed to keep silent, and when I ask him what's up, why is it he will never look a fellow in the eye, but takes a sudden interest in that old sunken barge that's been in the river for years?" "And when I ask him what the landing was like, why does he get so absent minded, and keep putting spoonful after spoonful of sugar in his tea? Are you sure he was there?" His mother caught my elusive eye and gave me a smile of sympathy and understanding. "Why don't you tell him about it, dear, he is old enough to understand now, and I think it will do you both a lot of good." And so at last, after twenty

twenty years, I have promised to write an account of the landing, and to draw a rough sketch of the Anzac Cove, for the education of "Lugs."

Doubtless many of you have read Official accounts of the Landing, written guardedly and as free from truth as a frong from feathers. This is not an official communication, but I will pledge my word of honour as a poor harmless old digger of 39, that it is true in every detail and as brief as circumstances will permit. Before starting the story, it will be necessary for me to explain certain formations and events which precede it, and I must beg of you to forgive me if in my story I appear to draw attention to myself. Remember it is the Landing as I saw it.

The First Contingent to leave Australia in 1914 was the 1st. Division, consisting of 12 Battalions, or three Brigades. Each Battalion consisted of about 1100 men. 1st., 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Battalions were the 1st Brigade, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th Battalions were the 2nd Brigade and 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th. the 3rd Brigade; I belonged to the 11th Battalion, and therefore was a member of the 3rd Brigade at the ripe old age of 18 years.

The First Division took up a position on the edge of the Sahara Desert at Mena, Egypt, and started training in earnest. There was great rivalry between the different Brigades and the climax was reached about the 1st of March, 1915, when we, the 3rd Brigade left Egypt under secret orders. Rumour ran riot; we were going to France; we were going to Italy, then to Russia and many other places, but in fact we went to Lemnos Island about 40 miles from Gallipoli. Lemnos Island is crescent in shape, with both

extremities nearly meeting. It had a wonderful Harbour about two miles across, circular and with deep water almost to the shore. There were many other ships in the harbour, mostly Men-of-War, French, English and one Russian Cruiser with five funnels which we called the "Packet of Woodbines." Amongst the British ships was the then latest battle ship, "Queen Elizabeth," and the old "Triumph" which was sunk a few months later while shelling the peninsula. Each evening at sunset a chain of mines was stretched across the mouth of the harbour which made us feel safe from the marauding sub.

We spent six weeks in this harbour living on the troop ships and practising landing on the shore by means of the ships' lifeboats. The Island was populated by Greek peasants who ran in terror from us at our first landing, but afterwards found us very profitable clients, who had plenty of money and no sense of value. We spent the days skirmishing, using the rock breastworks which the Greeks and Turks had used sometime before, whilst disputing the ownership of the Island. At night we returned tired to our troopships.

It was during these weeks of training that I learned the meaning of true comradeship. I was recovering from an illness which I had contracted whilst in Egypt, and the way in which the older men of my platoon cared for me and shouldered my share of fatigue work left me dumb with gratitude and wonder. Our platoon, which consisted of ^{about} 60 men, was one big happy family; almost every one had a nick-name. One whose initials were L.C. was called "Elaie." Another, F. G. Brown, was called "Peachy," and another who had been to the

North Pole and had his ears frost bitten, we called "Frosty"; I, being a bush-bred lad, was called "Mulga." They were all men of the finest physique, and we came to understand and love each other during those few months we were together with a love that you, who have not been to War, can never understand.

During this time, the battle ships steamed out almost daily to shell the Peninsular, doing little harm, but advertising the fact to the Turks that we were going to make a landing. One day a small landing party went ashore to scout. They were found next day crucified with bayonets and left to die. This was to show us the kind of reception we would receive when we landed.

THE LANDING.

On the morning of the 24th of April, we had a distinguished visitor aboard our ship, General Sir Ian Hamilton, who was in charge of the Gallipoli Campaign. We were assembled on deck, and I think we all realized that the long expected was about to happen - if we had any doubts, they were soon dispelled. I cannot remember the whole of his address, but what I ^{can} remember, I will give you in the General's own words.

"Men of the 3rd. Brigade. You have been chosen to undertake a feat of arms which has never been heard of in the Annals of War, - to land in an enemies' fortified country. The 3rd Brigade will be the covering party for the

rest of the Australian and New Zealand Forces; you will land first and keep the enemy at bay whilst the rest land. If ^{your} you do/work properly a small steam tug will be able to carry what is left of the 3rd Brigade back to Australia, but, if you fail, God help you. There is only one direction for the 3rd Brigade, and that is Onward. There is no turning back, when you land you burn your boats behind you. You may fall, but others will follow on and avenge you, it would be impossible to take you off again if we tried, - you would be massacred on the beach. Tomorrow is Sunday the 25th. April. You will land before dawn, and may God be with you. The element of surprise is your only chance, therefore no man is to fire a shot; you will have to do your killing with cold steel. To make sure no shot is fired, you will land with empty rifles. That is all men."

It was then made known that a grindstone was available on the after deck where troops could sharpen their bayonets, and that dull black would be issued to Sergeants in charge of platoons for dulling the shine of the bayonets. I took my place in that blood-thirty queue at the grindstone to wait my¹ turn to sharpen my bayonet. I was feeling sick and scared, and I was afraid I would be a coward when it came to the test and I marvelled at the way the diggers chaffed each other and joked about their prospects. The hot favourite was a burly veteran with rows of medals on his chest, whom we called Robbo. He had been like a mother to me and had often told me stories of his adventures in other wars. The pains

that he took to put a keen edge on his bayonet caused quite a laugh, but he was not satisfied until he had finished it off with an oil stone to such an edge that he could shave the hair off his arm. Hobbs noticed I was not looking too good, so he took me away from the crowd for a quiet talk. I told him I was scared, but he only laughed. "You're not scared, son, that's only stage fright. They are all the same - that's why they laugh and joke - but when the curtain goes up, you will wonder why you were nervous at all. Stick with me, "Mulga," and when I say "curtain" lay back your ears and into them!" I felt a lot better after that and went about packing my gear and filling my pouches with bullets.

After dinner A and G Companies were transhipped to the cruiser, "London." This was done to make the landing more uniform, and because our ships boats were not capable of taking us all at one load. There was a lot of good natured chaffing, goodbyes, and promises to meet in Constantinople, or in Hell. We were all laden like pack-mules, our outfit consisted of web equipment (fighting order) with the haversack strapped on the back in place of the pack and containing three days rations of biscuits and tinned meat.. An extra bag of small biscuits was tied below this as an emergency. Our pouches contained 150 rounds of ammunition and we carried two extra cloth bandoliers containing another 100 rounds each. Each man carried extra, either a pick shovel or a bill-hook, - a kind of chopper with a hooked .

point, used for cutting away barbed wire. The pack with our extra clothes and boots and other necessities was carried by separate straps on our backs, and could be dropped when we landed on the beach. They had our names and units marked on them so that, if we lived, we could recover them again. The whole outfit weighed 96 lbs.

About 4 p.m. we weighed anchor and steamed slowly towards the mouth of the harbour down a line of Warships of countries. The sailors were lined up on the decks of each ship, and as we steamed past, they stood to attention whilst their ship dipped her flag in salute. Then the sailors cheered us until I began to think we must really be heroes.. When clear of the harbour, we headed away from the Peninsular and back towards Alexandria. This was to mislead any spies who might be interested in our movements. As I stood on the after deck and watched the sun as it slowly sank from sight beneath the sea, tinting^{both} the sky and sea an ominous red, I wondered if I should ever see it again and if so, under what conditions. I realized that many hundreds of the 3rd Brigade would never live to see it rise again.

We spent the early part of the night getting every thing ready and writing letters. I wrote a letter to my mother, but I was a little light of the whole thing, as I did not wish to cause her unnecessary pain. Rope ladders were hung over the side of the ship at frequent intervals. It was now after midnight. The ship had turned and was heading

full speed towards Gallipoli. Our preparations were complete. There was nothing else we could do but wait. Nerves were strained to breaking point, and when someone suggested an impromptu concert, the suggestion was met with the approval of all on board. The concert was going well until some crack-brain sang "Just before the battle, Mother." That was the end of the concert. Brothers and pals drifted off to different parts of the darkened ship to have perhaps their last talk together. Horny hands were clapped and hearts laid bare as the ship, in total darkness, ploughed her way towards the greatest tragedy of the War. I wandered forward to the bow of the ship and stood there gazing into the darkness ahead, and wondering what perils it held. So engrossed was I with my thoughts that it was not until I felt his hand on my shoulder that I was aware that Hobbs was standing beside me. We talked of many things and made plans of what we should do after the war was over. We decided to go to New Guinea. Hobbs had been there some years before and was sure we could find gold. But it was hard to keep our minds off the present, and, at last, I asked Hobbs what chance he thought we had. Hobbs peered at me in the darkness as if he were trying to read my very soul, and when he spoke his voice was deep with earnestness. "If the surprise effect comes off, we may do all right, but if doesn't, we haven't a chance." Then, as if regretting what he had said, he laughed and shook me roughly, "Buck up, son, we're both getting stage fright again."

Further conversations were cut short by a whispered command to fall in and at the same time the engines stopped, and the ship began to slow down. Hobbs and I raced down to our troop deck and hurriedly assisted each other into our equipment, and then fell in with the remainder of our platoon. We had previously been allotted to the different boats and crews had been told off to row. When we filed up on deck again, a destroyer had come up on each side of our ship. One Company was allotted to each destroyer. Ours, the "Uak" was on the port side, and the ladder that led to its mid-ships was the one allotted to my platoon. We climbed down that rope ladder in pitch darkness with all our load on, and took up our position on the deck of the Destroyer. We were packed as tightly as we could stand. To make ourselves more comfortable Hobbs and I climbed astride the main torpedo tube. I looked in the end of the tube and found we were sitting on the top of a live torpedo. The Destroyers then left the ship towing behind them six of her boats each in two lines of three. We kept abreast and steamed slowly into the darkness. The ahead appeared the suggestion of a shore line; the Destroyers reversed their engines and went slowly astern, whilst the sailors brought the boats up alongside - three on either side. The painters tying the boats together were of such a length that when the leading boat was opposite the forward platform, which had been rigged on the destroyer, the following boats were opposite their respective platforms on either side of the Destroyers. It was whilst reversing her engines for this manoeuvre that one of the destroyers blew some sparks out

of her funnel. There was a solitary shot from somewhere on shore, then a few scattered shots, and then hell broke loose. A searching machine gun found our Destroyer and commenced drumming on her sides; then it lifted, and the dull smack of bulkets striking flesh and the groans of the wounded, froze the blood in my veins. "Here was smack behind me, a gurgling cry, and poor Robbo fell forward on top of me spewing blood all over me.. He grabbed at me to save himself, but missed, and slid sideways to the deck. I dropped beside him in a moment, but it was apparent even to my inexperienced eye that Robbo, that grand old soldier and adventurer, had fought his last battle. His right arm was shattered, and the bullet had entered his side high up. As I knelt over him peering anxiously into his face, he opened his eyes and tried to speak; his lips framed the words but no sound came. He squeezed my hand with his left and then I had lost the best friend a man ever had.

I was brought to my senses by the Sergeant who ordered me to my boat. Acting on an impulse, I stooped and picked up Robbo's rifle where it had fallen with the bayonet already fixed and placed my own beside him, then hurried to the boat. I, together with a young Englishman, had been told off to act as scouts. Our position was in the bow of the boat with the officer in charge, and to look out for Mines, entanglements or obstructions in the water, and to warn him of their presence. We reached the shore without further casualties, but then more trouble started. Imagine a huge ship's lifeboats carrying 60 men and the gear which we

had on beaching on a steeply sloping beach. When the bows of the boat grounded, the stern was in from 10 to 15 feet of water. The men, in their excitement, anxious to get ashore, jumped over the side of the boat from whatever position they happened to be in. Many of them jumped into deep water, and they were carried down by the heavy equipment which they were unable to shed, and drowned. Many others were wounded whilst wading ashore and drowned in shallow water. By now, the first streak of dawn was appearing above the hill tops in the immediate foreground, and from the top of these hills, the Turks were directing a withering fire on us both with machine gun and rifle. We formed a rough line and scrambled up the slope. There was nothing else to do, for to stay where we were meant certain death. It was then that I realised how true had been Rabbo's prophecy that when the curtain went up, we would wonder why we were ever nervous. Indeed it was now the Turk's turn to be nervous, for when they saw that howling, raging mass coming towards them, in spite of all they could do to prevent them, they turned and fled - at least, they tried to, but the diggers pursued them and murdered them as they ran. It was now light and looking back to the sea, I could see the boats returning to the ships in charge of a couple of sailors who had been allotted to each boat for that purpose, but many of them would return no more. The three boats which had been on our immediate left had never reached the shore. They were piled high with dead and drifting slowly out to sea. They had got the full blast

of a machine gun nest firing down one of the gullies which was afterwards called "Sharphel Gully." We now pushed inland as fast as we could move, keeping both flanks on the beach, but our casualties had been severe, so that the further we went the thinner became our line. About two miles inland we came to a steeply sloping hill like a land-slide, about a mile in length. We scrambled up this and when we reached the top, we looked across country which sloped gradually away towards the Dardanelles. But we had no time to admire the scenery for there waiting for us was the Turkish Army, what we had encountered before had merely been the outposts. As our men showed up above the ridge many of them were mowed down with machine guns, almost everyone being fatally shot, as it was in the head or upper part of the body. These rolled down the steep slope to form an army of dead at the bottom. So life like did they look as they lay there amongst the stunted olive bushes that a harassed staff officer, searching for reinforcements for a desperate position, ordered them to follow him; he was soon advised of his mistake. Then he took myself and about a dozen others and we ran for about a mile towards the left. He then pointed to a ridge that was bare and open about 150 yards out in front, and told us to reinforce the garrison already holding it. He explained to us briefly that the Turks were making a desperate counter attack on our left flank. Once they broke through, they could prevent our reinforcements from landing, and then surround and massacre us as they wished. He pointed out that it would be better for us to die fighting

on the ridge than to be butchered like sheep on the beach. We dashed out to the ridge and took our positions in the line of men. The point where I joined the line, I noticed a small depression in the ground about 5 ft circular and just a few inches deep. I took advantage of this and scooped out a bit more earth with my entrenching tool, and made myself fairly secure. I took the cartridges out of my pouches and piled them on the ground near me to ensure quick loading. Then with old Robbo's rifle pressed to my shoulder I settled down to give battle. About 150 yards in front of us the ridge dipped down into a valley, the further slope of the valley was visible about five to 6 hundred yards away. Down this the Turks were coming in swarms like ants to disappear from our sight in the valley. Presently the word was passed along to get ready to receive a charge, as the Turks were making for a bayonet attack. We were not kept waiting long for suddenly, with blood curdling yells, a line of bayonets appeared over the ridge in front of us. This line or wave was followed by another and another until it seemed impossible that the few men on the ridge could ever stop that hoard of savage cut-throats. But stop them we did; the rapid fire which we poured into them was too much for the Turks. Just when victory should have been theirs, they turned and fled back over the ridge, Why they did not come on and finish it is something which I could never understand, as at that time they out-numbered the Australians at least 20 to 1, and all the advantages were with them. I had been firing as fast as I could load and aim. The wood-work of Robbo's rifle was smoking and my fingers were burnt and bleeding with

working the hot belt and forcing clips of cartridges into the magazine. The Turks now concentrated^a hellish machine gun and rifle fire on our exposed position both from their close position and from the farther slope. Most of the men on our ridge had absolutely no cover, so that our casualties were severe. I began to think I was the only one left alive, when through that hell dashed a score or so of reinforcements; one of them was wearing my Battalion colours, but it was not until he dropped beside me that I recognized a survivor of my platoon, "Peachy." Poor old Peachy was in a mess; he was covered from head to foot in blood and mud, his clothes were torn to shreds and his eyes bulged like a frog's. I moved over and invited him into my hole. I asked him how the rest of the battalion had fared, and he answered that to the best of his knowledge, we were the only survivors. I told him of our desperate plight and that any moment the Turks would attack again. He suggested that he should gather ammunition from the dead whilst I kept a sharp look out. This he did by wriggling the ground, exposing himself terribly the while, but at last he arrived back with about a dozen bandoliers. We began piling the ammunition in front of us in such a way as to be picked up quickly and without loss of movement. Peachy suggested that I should attend to the Turks who came on one side of a small olive bush in front of us and he would watch the other side; this would prevent us wasting time by shooting the same man. We were just stacking the last of our ammunition when over they came again, this time in mass. It looked

as if the whole Turkish army was bearing down on us with fixed bayonets. We began firing into their ranks as fast as we could; the distance was so short, and they were massed so closely together that it was almost impossible to miss a shot. I thought that I was firing fast, but Peachy was like a wizard, he fired nearly two shots to my one. If it had not been for him I'm sure I could never have stopped them, - indeed he shot two bearded giants about 10 paces in front of us and on my side of the bush, these were coming at us with their bayonets in spite of all I could do. As it was they almost broke through but again the terrible fire was too much for them, and the survivors retired back over the ridge. But on the extreme left they had pushed the garrison back some distance so that they were now able to enfilade our ridge from the left. The position, though bad before, was now terrible. We were subjected to the terrific fire from the front and also a cross fire from our left. The enemy had brought some batteries of artillery into action and were now shelling us with shrapnel - the air was literally raining lead and the position seemed worse than hopeless. Word was passed along our line coming from some officer in a higher position on the ridge, shouted from one survivor to another, that the Turkish cavalry were massing in the valley for a charge, for every man to stay firm and sell his life as dearly as possible. Poor old Peachy looked at me and gulped, "I think this is the last of it, Walge, we haven't a dog's chance of getting out of here alive." He then suggested to me that in case one of us survived it would be nice to take a farewell message from the other to his mother,

and so we wrote a pitiful little note of farewell; I to my mother - or in the back page of Peachy's pay book and he to his mother in my book. As Peachy morbidly pointed out even if we were both killed our mothers still had a chance of receiving the message. My note was brief and very much to the point; I told her that we were in a desperate position without the slightest hope of living for more than a few minutes longer. I tried to explain to her what at that moment I felt, that it would be a relief to be dead and with my friend, than alive in that frightful hell of expectancy. But fortunately for us that Cavalry Charge never came; our message had reached the rear, a signal had been flashed to the battle ships "Triumph" and "Queen Elizabeth", both of which steamed quickly into position and opened fire on the Turkish Cavalry and massed infantry in the valley which led down to the sea. I was afterwards told that the slaughter was frightful; the 15 inch high explosive and shrapnel from the "Queen Elizabeth" reduced both men and horses to a bloody pulp. It was evening now and the sun was just disappearing behind the Island of Ebroa which was about 8 miles off the coast of Anzac. The Turks were now waiting for the darkness for the next attack and contented themselves in the meantime with concentrating everything they had to fire with on our ridge. Just about dusk a runner came dashing along our line yelling to us to drop back on the landslide ridge, about 150 yards in our rear, where the New Zealanders were digging a trench. That man was here, he earned a V.C. every step he took. What became of him I do not know, but I think

he perished. Peachy and I started for the rear without further delay. The Turks noticed the retirement and concentrated their fire; it was a case of every man for himself. The bag of biscuits which I had on the back of my belt had become loosened, and was now dangling on about 3 ft of cord, and, as I ran, the biscuits got between my legs and tripped me up. I went sprawling and so did my hopes. For a few seconds I lay there giving up entirely, and then the will to live predominated, and I rose and ran on again. I reached the lip of the hill and received a cheer from the New Zealanders garrisoning it. I began then to realize the scheme of things and the part we had played. Whilst we had been fighting all day holding that terribly exposed ridge, the reinforcing battalions had cut a ledge round the top of our landslide ridge, using the sand and earth ~~in~~ to fill sandbags with which to build a loophole on the parapet. They now had a firstclass defence and a picked position, but alas the price had been heavy. Now darkness had fallen and the hell which we had suffered during the day grew worse with the darkness. Word was passed along the line that an Indian mountain battery was entrenching in our line, a message came back to ascertain who those men were as there were no Indian troops yet on shore. It was discovered that they were Turks dressed as Indians placing a deadly little mountain gun to fire directly along our trench. They were speedily despatched. Another message was passed along not to fire on the troops in front as some more of the survivors of the ridge were returning. The answers returned from Head Quarters

that as the Turks were dressing in our uniforms and attempting to get amongst us in the darkness it was necessary to shoot all men in front, and as this was the reward for the gallant fight that the little garrison had put up on the ridge. They were nowshot in cold blood by the very reinforcement they had prayed for all day, whilst they attempted to return under cover of darkness. I was like a raving mad man. I ran along the trench screaming and cursing and begging them to let my cobbles in. A few did manage to reach the trench alivebut the majority were butchered. And so through the hours of darkness continued this hideous night-mare. A critical moment during the night was when a staff officer dashed along the trench ordering everybody to retire to the bench as were being surrounded. This order was quickly countermanded, and the man was shot. He was a German Officer who had entered our lines disguised as one of our own Officers, to endeavour to create a panic amongst us. He was a brave man for he must have known the risk he ran and the penalty for failure. Another distressing incident was that of a young New Zealander. He had been shot in the abdomen and partly disembowelled. He was a lad I think younger than myself, scarcely more than a boy and he kept calling for his mother. There was nothing we could do for him, and it was a relief when at last he died. Many thousands of men like him died of wounds amongst those stunted olive bushes during the early fighting on Gallipoli, owing to the lack of medical attention.

The day broke clear and beautiful and it seemed

as though the whole thing had been some hideous dream, during the whole of this time I had been under too great a stress and kept too busy to even think of eating; my rations still remained intact and my water bottle untouched. During the day a staff officer coming along the trench noticed my colours and asked me where the rest of my battalion was, I told him that I was the sole survivor, as I had missed Peachy on the way back from the ridge when I had fallen, and believed him to be dead. He laughed and patted me on the back "It's not as bad as that, son," he said, "you've done splendidly and now you're going to have a rest, go down to the beach and you will find what is left of the 3rd brigade. We are going to give them three days' rest. I was overjoyed at this news and started down one of the gullies. Before I reached the beach I met a bedraggled bloodstained, pitiful remnant of a once glorious third Brigade, not sufficient to form one battalion. The promised rest was not forthcoming as the Turks failing in their attack on the left flank had now launched another on our right. We were sent up to another ridge almost as bare as the one of the previous day and so the hell of yesterday was continued. We were told that the French had landed between Anzac and Cape Helles, that the English were working down from Cape Helles, the French were going to link up with them and us and sweep the Peninsula, if we could hold on till the following morning all would be well. They told us lies, the French had never landed and the English had never budged from their original position, indeed some days later some of the survivors of the 1st Division were sent down to take the position for them

which they had been unable to do.

I could tell you many more things of the Gallipoli Campaign, incidents of heroism and of slaughter, but that is not the landing; sufficient to say that the casualties during the first three days of the landing were so severe that the authorities dared not let it be known made public, had they shown in one casualty list all the dead and wounded in the landing, there would have been no more recruits, and the public would have revolted against it. As it was more than six months later, letters were coming from parents to men who were killed at the Landing and their names had never been published in the Casualty List.

Thus, my dear, "Lugs," did we celebrate the first Anzac Day, and that is why standing on the heights before the monument, looking across the waters of the River below at dawn on Anzac Day, I am reminded of many a dawn on the heights of Gallipoli where I had stood lonely amongst thousands, looking across the blue Mediterranean Bay where many hundred brave members of the old Brigade are resting, and where Hobbs, the bravest soldier of them all, and the truest friend I ever have known, lies, unshrouded, and forgotten by the country for which he gave his life.